Les Fleurs du Mal

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Les Fleurs du Mal

by LovelyLotus

Summary

In which Will is a reluctant contract killer and Hannibal is his handler.

He lifted the gun and chose a worldline as thought it was one of Hannibal's figs. Every moment led to this final moment. He brought the fruit to his lips and bit down on it hard. It burst. The chosen worldline bloomed from the end of his muzzle with smoke and the charred taste of gunpowder.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Saint Petersburg, Russia.

The colors and scenes of a thousand deaths flashed in front of his eyes like some strange and exotic dream.

The lights of Sankt Petersburg pulsed beneath his skin like a second heartbeat.

He was just another clock counting down in the rafters of city square. A finite movement.

He lifted the gun and chose a worldline as thought it was one of Hannibal's figs.

Every moment led to this final moment.

He brought the fruit to his lips and bit down on it hard.

It burst.

The chosen worldline bloomed from the end of his muzzle with smoke and the charred taste of gunpowder.

A paroxysm of scarlet seared itself into the backs of his eyelids, joining the others that already lived there. The shock and outrage had long quieted down. All he felt now was relief, like the end of a long, bitter sigh.

One shot.

Through the end of his scope, Will made sure the target was down. The man's briefcase had opened and papers were flying through the air like a loft of gray pigeons. Will didn't focus on the details. He knew the minute he gave his mind— his empathy— a shred of leeway, the petals of a story he had no time for, nor any interest in, would unfold before him.

He would not prick his hand on this rose.

The next few moments were a haze of packing. His gun collapsed and neatly fit underneath the top layer of his briefcase. Will scaled down the rope he had put into place. It led two floors under the roof. He wouldn't be spotted by the cameras in the stairwell. He wouldn't be spotted by anyone. A ghost.

He didn't exist in this place or time.

By the time he exited the building, he was dressed like any business man coming home from a day of work. Sunset was hemorrhaging across the sky.

His mind was playing death on repeat. It was his ever-present shadow. His mistress, his friend, his mother.

He nearly collided into a woman. He apologized in Russian.

She blinked and blushed.

Married, unhappily so. Busy work life. High paying job. Estranged from her children. One day, her husband would hit a little too hard. She would reach the end of the long beam of steel that held her upright. Bruises nobody ever asked about. She would reach for a knife. She was a survivor.

Will thought for a second about following her home. Disposing of her husband for her. Taking away some of the pain. Ridding her of the burden her life had given her. Halting the slow unwinding of her clock as it came apart gear by gear.

He walked on.

He hadn't meant to look.

"*It is situations such as these," Hannibal said, nursing his creamy coffee, "that compels you to act. Your mind shows you the story of a soul and you feel compelled to follow the narrative to the end. But you cannot save everyone, Will. Humankind must follow their own stories to their terminal points."*

Will frowned, sipping his own coffee, black. "Then what are we doing?"

"We don't concern ourselves with sheep. We find the monsters— the wolves— that walk on this earth and end their stories."

Will stared blankly into his coffee. Hannibal reached forward for his hand. The contact was jarring, but grounding. His head cleared, like a drop of acid in a perfectly titrated solution.

"Look at me. You are not one of them, Will. You must separate yourself from the idea. If you let their banal minds and souls into yours, they will cause you no end of pain and suffering. Don't look, Will. Not at them."

He stopped for coffee in the café Hannibal liked taking him to. He reached for the book in his briefcase. *Les Fleurs du Mal* .

Hannibal had bought him so many poetry books when Will first revealed a predilection for them. Most were not in English, but over the years, Will had learned to read them all.

The words grounded him, like Hannibal's touch on his skin:

But the god, who eludes me, I chase all in vain.

He thought of Hannibal.

Hannibal's eyes, staring into the silent parts of him, and lending them his voice.

Sunset eyes. Eyes like blood.

He let the pages flicker on their own volition.

The violin quivers like a tormented heart,

A tender heart, that hates the vast, black void.

The sky is sad and beautiful like an immense altar

The sun drowns itself in its own clotting blood.

Will let his eyes drift to the city-scape. Brightly lit buildings scraped across the bellies of clouds, like blades running across skin too lightly to break it open and watch it bleed.

The sky was inflamed. The color before the bruise darkened. A pinkened scar.

He finished his coffee and started the walk home.

He waved his ID and the security guard activated the button in the elevator that would let him up to the top floor of the building. The Pent Suite.

As soon as he had entered and taken off his coat and shoes, Hannibal had an arm wrapped around his waist and lips at his neck, as if greeting his husband back from work.

Will couldn't hide his blush, but he knew it only sold their story further. Two newlyweds, rich, well-to-do, and deeply in love.

The television was on, but silent. Will saw the evidence of his work and knew Hannibal must have too.

"Oh, Lyosha! You're home. Kolya was just wondering when you'd be back," Maria Petrovna greeted.

"I stopped by a café on my way back," he explained, setting his briefcase down on the shelf near the door that led to the office. Hannibal's firm hand around his hips made it hard to maneuver. He took off his suit jacket, revealing his white dress shirt and black suspenders. Hannibal's thumbs unconsciously looped under the straps.

"You didn't spoil your appetite, did you, Alyoshenka?" Hannibal asked, warm and tender near his ear.

"Of course not, Nikolinka," Will replied, pecking Hannibal's cheek.

He turned to the blonde-haired woman gracing their counter. "It's so good to see you, Masha," Will said warmly.

She smiled, young and newlywed herself. Hannibal had invited the couple for dinner tonight, Will remembered. Her husband would be home soon from his own job. Her ring flashed on her right hand, and Will felt her story spin into the air in front of him like a cloud of dust. Bright like the sun. Unavoidable. He was drawn into it for a little over a second.

Hannibal yanked him tighter against his warm body by the suspenders.

Will almost resisted, but then he relaxed. The warmth of close contact with Hannibal slipped over his eyes like a pair of sunglasses.

He let the dust settle.

Masha was good to both of them, yet he would have ripped her secrets from her like some common purse-snatcher. Unspeakably rude.

Self-loathing rose like a tide.

By his side, Hannibal shook his head, absolving him. The motion was slight; Masha hadn't noticed it. Will exhaled and forced the waves down.

After a few seconds, his mentor let him go. "Excuse me, I have to check in on the food."

Will moved to the small sink behind the counter to get a glass of water. He sat next to Masha, slowly turning the glass in his hand to see how the light refracted.

Hannibal re-entered, eyes immediately seeking out Will. After they found each other, he settled on the other side of the island, posture perfectly erect.

"How was your meeting?" Masha asked Will curiously.

The television flashed its dark headline— story playing over and over until tomorrow's news.

Will smiled, meeting Hannibal's knowing eyes.

"Productive."

"That's good! Any chance it changed your decision? Kolya tells me you both are leaving tomorrow."

"No, unfortunately not," Will apologized. "We have to go abroad to oversee another branch of the company. It's been long overdue for review, so we don't know how long we'll stay there," Will explained, breaking eye contact with Hannibal.

"It's wonderful you're traveling together, though you know Dimka and I will miss your company terribly."

"Don't worry, Masha." Hannibal smiled, terribly charming. "We'll be back before you know it."

---

7 years ago.

When Hannibal first saw him on the basement floor of the exchange site, something in his soul had echoed like a flight of birds.

"Has he been drugged?"

"The usual cocktail, but no sedatives in the past 6 hours."

"Why has he been damaged?"

“He’s a biter. Nearly ripped off one of my colleague’s more intimate bits.”

Hannibal smiled delightedly. “One has to wonder how it got so close to his teeth.”

The man had the decency to shift uncomfortably. “He's rather difficult to manage, doctor. Are you sure you want him? We have several other—”

“No, no, thank you. He's the one I've selected.”

“William Graham, huh? May I ask what made him your decision. The price was… hefty to say the least.”

“You may ask, but I will not answer.”

Hannibal reached forward and claimed Will’s jaw between his thumb and index finger. He gently turned the bloody face left to right. Classical features— high cheekbones, strong jaw, delicate nose, and dark, curly eyelashes. A living piece of art.

No, not quite— a canvas that was now his sole property and responsibility.

He tightened his grip. William’s dull eyes indicated that he was entrapped in labyrinths of his own making. His way of escaping the horror the past weeks had to have been. The solid grip and the prolonged eye contact would bring him back.

Sure enough, awareness gradually seeped into his eyes as he arrived back the waking world.

“If you can understand me, blink twice.”

Blearily, the young man followed his instructions.

“Good. I need you to listen to me carefully. Are you listening?”

The man nodded slowly.

“From this moment onwards, you are yourself no longer. You are mine. And I am going to make you a god on this Earth.”

Will opened his chapped lips and bared his teeth. His words were hoarse. “I have no interest in godhood.”

Hannibal smiled— it was a terrible thing. “You will.”

Paris, France.

The party was overwhelming, the sights and sounds like a jumble of discolored marbles rattling in a jar.

He would have to enter the fray.

Hannibal had carefully picked his suit— midnight blue with silver and gold constellations scattered across the dark panels of fabric.

When he first had put it on, he had thought it too conspicuous, but now at the venue, he knew he would fit right in.

He shoved a hand through his glossed curls, ignoring Hannibal's frown.

The man reached forward, fussing over his slim black tie and adjusting his hair again.

Will allowed it, hoping the darkness of the car would hide his blush.

"You carry the stars on your shoulders tonight," Hannibal whispered. Will was probably mistaken because Hannibal was impossible to read, but his mentor sounded almost reverent.

"Are you ready?"

Will nodded, leaning forward to cup Hannibal's cheeks with his hands. He brought their foreheads together slowly, so their eyes could meet in the darkness.

The noise silenced. The world around them flowered and faded.

And Will *saw.*

The party was something from one of Will's F. Scott Fitzgerald novels.

Decadence for the sake of decadence. Champagne sparkling like diamonds.

Hannibal was looking forward to the aftermath immensely.

William turned to face him, as was his custom.

In his eyes, his protege usually flickered between the concrete, fluid lines of Caravaggio and the more blurred, spilling strokes of Richter.

In moments like this, when Will was becoming, the latter view was so much more accurate.

William leaned forward and pressed their foreheads together, looking deeply into Hannibal's eyes and cupping his face. Hannibal carefully reached forward, cupping the sides of William's smooth, freshly shaven face in return. After less than a second, the inevitable spilling over happened; some essence of his own self trapped in the refracting prisms of Will's transparent eyes— darkness blooming through flowers of light.

Hannibal sometimes wondered if Will would ever one day get lost in the unfathomable, labyrinthine depths of their mind palace where only Hannibal could locate him. The thought

filled him with a strange sense of longing.

Will slowly retreated from his grip, his eyes now bearing the cold light of stars.

He was dressed to the nines in the suit Hannibal had carefully selected for him. The deep midnight made his eyes look bluer than the sea. Combined with the fierce, but dispassionate look on his face and the delicate stars on his shoulders, he looked like a wrathful angel.

Hannibal violently quelled the wave of desire that swept over him.

Will smiled: dark and disarmingly seductive. After a second, the look was swept under, replaced with a dazed and unaffected countenance. He looked like any other bored socialite. “I’ll be back soon,” he promised in French, stepping out of the car.

It was charming. Out of all the language they shared, even Hannibal agreed Will spoke French the loveliest. There was a tiny lilt he had yet to identify that he suspected was deeply related with his prodigy’s past.

Hannibal already knew he was going to watch this one.

A few minutes after Will left, he followed him into the event hall.

“Invitation?” the bodyguard asked impatiently.

Hannibal wordlessly handed over the slip of paper with a smile.

“Right this way, sir.”

Hannibal settled along one of the bars ordering a glass of one of their finest vintage wines. He inhaled the crisp scent of cedar and took a sip, eyes roaming the room for Will.

His prodigy was already in place. He was angling his body enticingly as he spoke to Andres Brodeur, their target for tonight.

Hannibal noted with a strange mix of distaste and pride all the leering eyes moving over Will’s body. Some were filled with innocent admiration, while others were far less pure. The latter half were far from worthy. Hannibal swallowed down the murderous rage that lit his eyes red. He wanted to pluck out their eyes for daring to look at what was his.

The bait was taken. Brodeur slid his no doubt sweaty and filthy hand down Will’s back to rest on his partner’s rather well-endowed bottom. The hand squeezed obscenely.

Will’s body stiffened ever so slightly, and Hannibal wanted to rip the appendage off and make “lamb” salad with fregola out of it.

His prodigy relaxed after a millisecond, vestal blush adorning his face.

Hannibal’s protectiveness grew. He knew Will had used such strategies before to get to his target— taking advantage of their lust to get them to lower their guard long enough for him to strike. These kills were always his favorite to watch. He loved seeing the evidence of Will’s

rejection of their lesser, impurer love. He adored how Will always came straight to Hannibal's arms afterwards.

Brodeur and Will left the room together.

Hannibal waited fifteen minutes before following.

He slipped down the hallway, quickly finding his mažas vilkas third door down. He entered, locking the door behind him.

He had missed the actual moment of the kill.

Will was lying back on the table legs slightly spread apart, staring absently at his scarlet hand. He was surprisingly clean for the amount of blood present. Only a small blood splatter adorned his cheek. Hannibal wanted to devour him. Lick away the blood and leave his mark all over the pale arch of Will's throat and collarbones. He resisted the urge and looked away.

Hannibal noted with distaste the location Andres had chosen for his congress. The man had no taste. A simple office room with a desk, chair, and curtained window. He had wanted to take William over the table, like a common whore. By the door, the target's bodyguard lay slain. He had been drawn by the screams, too loud and desperate to be the result of passion. Single bullet, muffled by a silencer and the sounds of the party.

The man of honor lay on the floor, barely alive and bleeding out rapidly from multiple well placed stab wounds. The murder was, as always, incredibly artistic. Will's imagination always fashioned it so. His protege had taken away the groping hands that had touched without asking. But still, Hannibal could easily see everywhere Will had restrained himself—had held himself back from his more visceral instincts.

One day, Hannibal would see him let go.

Will turned to look at him, eyes meeting desperately. He needed his anchor.

"Hannibal. I'm done with him. Let's go?"

Hannibal nodded, reaching to help Will off the table. As soon as he slid off the desk, Will paused for a moment, clean hand gripping Hannibal's suit. Then, he leaned forward, burying himself into Hannibal's arms. Hannibal's hand went right for the curls. He dug into Will's silky hair, stroking and tugging rhythmically. His other hand rubbed soft circles on Will's back.

He closed his eyes and threw open the doors to their mind palace.

Will stood, a figure of black, watching his crime unfold silently. It happened like a painting. Scarlet splattered across the canvas, and Hannibal sighed in awe as the roses bloomed.

Will had no match in any world.

His hand quickly located the mark he had placed on Will when he had claimed him as his student. Slightly raised, but fully healed skin. A viper, consuming a man. He pressed down,

and Will relaxed further into his arms. Hannibal swept aside another crashing wave of arousal.

Will was the only person he could not be with in that way. Their love was not meant to be carnal. It would devastate them.

Hannibal couldn't trust himself with even this simple embrace. His desire was growing, dark and dangerous, the longer Will stayed, soft and trusting, in his arms. So like a little lamb, cuddling against the wolf's maw.

He detached carefully.

"Come now, let's be on our way."

Will's dark blue eyes flashed with some unknown emotion, but he wordlessly accepted the handkerchief Hannibal offered and wiped down his right hand. Hannibal retook the cloth from him and gently dabbed away at the blood splatter on his cheek. Will frowned and looked away, reaching for his starry suit jacket to hide any stain on his dark navy shirt.

They did a quick, but thorough wipe down of the scene together, then turned the room temperature down and made for the door, locking it behind them as they left.

Brodeur was much too involved in the Parisian underbelly to allow cameras back in these hallways. Hannibal and Will easily rejoined the party, garnering suggestive stares as they made their way back.

They would have to steer clear of France for a while. No one could keep their eyes off Will. They would easily be able to describe Brodeur's "conquest" if asked.

Brodeur didn't have money, but he acted as if he did. The only two cameras in the ball room were easily tampered with (which Will had done ahead of time), cheap devices.

This time tomorrow maybe, the businessman's death would be spread throughout the news. No one would miss him. He was involved in a human trafficking ring that spanned the globe. The corruption beneath Brodeur's skin would be exposed and brought to light, like Will had done to his organs with one cut across his abdomen.

Hannibal let his arm rest more heavily across Will's waist, and the man shot him an exasperated look.

As soon as they left the party, Hannibal quickly removed his hand from the other man's body. He had no intention of misleading his prodigy.

The man gave him another irritated look, but Hannibal herded him to the car and started the engine.

They traded vehicles partway for safety's sake, though Hannibal couldn't deny that he enjoyed Will's hands and thighs clinging tightly to him on the motorcycle. They headed back to their apartment in the 16th district. They would leave on an early morning flight the next day.

After they crossed the threshold, Will disappeared into his bedroom to shower and change into pajamas.

He wouldn't get sleep tonight unless Hannibal intervened.

He stirred cocoa, sugar, and salt together in the saucepan, adding milk and bittersweet chocolate as he went. When the drink was finished, he neatly poured equal portions into two separate mugs. While the cups were not ugly, they definitely did not meet Hannibal's high standards for dishware. But Will had picked them out in a sentimental moment, so they were treasured nonetheless. He carefully crushed two sleeping pills and stirred them into Will's mug.

His protege sat on the balcony, wrapped in a soft, fleece blanket. His book lay closed next to him. It had failed to capture his interest tonight. Hannibal handed him the drink and Will nodded gratefully, immediately drinking and letting the hot liquid warm him up from the inside out.

Hannibal noted with a smile that the opposite seat already had another fleece blanket on it. He draped it over himself and settled into the iron-work chair.

They sat in comfortable silence, watching city life pass-by.

"Where to, next?" Will wondered out loud, eyes already heavy with sleep.

"America, then we'll take a break."

"It is already the end of the set?"

"Yes. Just one more."

"Who?" Will asked, yawning.

Hannibal smiled, catching the mug before it toppled from Will's hands.

"I'll show you the file tomorrow. Come now, Brangusis. Off to bed."

Hannibal gently led Will to his bedroom, pulling the duvet up to the slumbering man's chin.

He sat by Will gripping his hand.

Together, they were perfect. Perfectly complementary. Perfectly suited for one another. Two pieces of a jigsaw that fit with no other piece but each other.

Will had already given him so much.

But Hannibal wanted so much more. He wanted Will's heart to keep hidden away forever. He craved Will's body, to hold safe and conquered under his own. He longed to be the sole proprietor of Will's lips and his pleasure. To be the only trespasser of his mind. To bewitch his eyes so they never wished to look away. To enthrall his soul so it resided right next to

Hannibal's and walked with him through every universe so they would never be alone again. He wanted Will's bloodlust. His fury. His passion. His love.

He wanted every piece of Will, willingly given or not.

He had never felt so deeply for anyone, except maybe Mischa. But the adoration he held for his little sesuo belonged to an entirely different world than his feelings for Will. *Draugas.*

He would hold too tight. He would mark too deep. He would take too much.

He would love to destruction.

Hannibal sat beside his prodigy and ached with absolute longing.

He wanted no other in this world but the one he must never have.

End Notes

I plan for this to be a series of one shots, so while this one is done, more is coming. College is really kicking my butt lately, and I've just been so tired and sleep deprived that this is the first thing I've written with any inspiration in a long time, so comments are really appreciated if you have a spare moment, even if it's just a smiley face.

Also, inspired by Killing Eve, Son Lux, and Charles Baudelaire's poem "Les Fleurs du Mal."

Thank you so much for reading.
-LovelyLotus

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